



Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**


**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2021

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Public Hospitals, Emergency Departments**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.52 am): Every day our ambulance services and hospitals are working hard to deliver services to Queenslanders. Yesterday, the Queensland Audit Office tabled a report that demonstrated the size and scale of the pressures on our emergency departments. In the last seven years there has been a 45.8 per cent increase in ambulance presentations to emergency departments and a 20.5 per cent increase in walk-ins. This is despite population growth of 9.5 per cent over the same period. In addition, the arrival and impacts of COVID have exacerbated the pressures on the health system.

Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021 there were over 2.4 million presentations to Queensland's emergency departments, an increase of 15.4 per cent. Not only that, the report indicated that the people attending are sicker, meaning more complex cases, with category 1 increasing by 41 per cent and category 2 by 50 per cent. This all comes at a time when our emergency departments are under additional pressure with staff also being used for hotel quarantine, fever clinics and vaccination centres across the entire state.

The report contains five recommendations to improve the accuracy of emergency data and quality, continue and implement measures and guidelines to measure performance and success, and monitor and report on the use of short-term treatment areas. All recommendations are accepted and Queensland Health is already working towards addressing and improving these matters, as detailed in Queensland Health's letter to the Auditor-General on 3 September.

Measures include: continuing the statewide rollout of the patient access coordination hub model to improve data exchange, along with improvements to manuals and training programs to support data entry and a dashboard to detect data entry errors; resuming the statewide rollout of the digital ambulance report application; updating HHS service agreements to include KPIs to better manage performance and accountability; greater utilisation of the Patient Access Advisory Committee by Queensland Health to analyse the effectiveness of initiatives; and finalising the completion of the ED Air project to standardise ED data definitions, develop clear clinical principles for patient care and review short stay unit and admission guidelines.

In addition, last month I announced an additional \$163.7 million to open an additional 351 beds across the public and private sector. When added to the additional 65 beds we are providing through our \$100 million investment in Care4QLD phase 1, we are adding beds roughly equivalent to opening a new hospital the size of the Queensland Children's Hospital. This is in addition to expanding initiatives such as: \$10 million to permanently expand residential aged-care support services; \$5 million to pilot targeted expansions of post-acute services to support faster and safe discharge from hospital; \$4 million to support appropriate discharge of long-stay patients; \$4 million to expand our mental health co-responder model; and \$5 million for a targeted expansion of the Transfer Initiative Nurse model.

Health systems across Australia are currently under extreme pressure, but it is only the Palaszczuk Labor government in Queensland that will continue to invest and build our healthcare system to ensure it delivers for Queenslanders.